Loss of foodgrains production

916. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of loss of foodgrains production suffered this year by the country due to the failure of Kharif crops on account of severe drought;

(b) in which manner Government proposes to make good the loss so as to maintain the public distribution system in the country; and

(c) the steps which are proposed to ensure better Rabi crop for 2009 so as to offset the production loss in Kharif crops this year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) The Foodgrain production has been estimated about 96.53 million tonnes (as per 1st Advance Estimates) in the country as compared to 117.70 million tonnes during Kharif, 2008. Loss of foodgrain has been reported due to erratic and deficient rainfall during Kharif, 2009 season in major parts of the country.

(b) and (c) Minimum support price of rice has been increased from Rs. 850/- and 880/- for Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2008-09 to Rs. 950/- and Rs. 980/- (KMS 2009-10) per quintal for common and Grade 'A' of Paddy, respectively with a Rs. 50/- per quintal as bonus and Rs.1000/- for Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2008-09 to Rs. 1080/- (RMS 2009-10) of Wheat to enhance the availability of Rice and Wheat. Export of non-basmati rice has been banned and import of wheat and rice on private account at zero duty is allowed. Central issue price of wheat and rice has not been increased since 1.7.2002 to lessen burden of inflation on the poor. State Governments have been requested to maximize the procurement of rice by opening sufficient procurement centres and other necessary arrangement for procurement of paddy and its milling.

Besides, the Government of India has taken several other initiatives to increase more coverage of various crops during Rabi, 2009 and also to enhance the productivity. States have been given more flexibility to utilize the funds to meet the additional demand for requirement of seed distribution component. Subsidy norms of Rice, Wheat, Jowar, Bajra and Pulses (only for Rabi/summer 2009) have been increased under various crops development schemes of Ministry of Agriculture to reduce the burden on farmers in drought affected area. Age norms of certified seed of rice, wheat and pulses have been relaxed and additional area coverage under boro/summer rice/wheat/pulses are planned for enhancing production. Additional allocation of rust resistance and terminal heat-tolerance varieties of wheat minikit is made. Availability and supply of essential inputs such as fertilizer, additional power for irrigation has been ensured in coordination with States and various Central Ministries.

Modern warehouses in villages

917. SHRI BHAGAT SINGH KOSHYARI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that storage of foodgrains in villages by farmers has led to losses due to pests, weather, etc.;

(b) whether there is any scheme to help panchayats or mandals to build modern warehouses with small capitals to store grains in villages; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. A Capital Investment Subsidy Scheme namely Rural Godown Scheme has been launched by Department of Agriculture and Cooperation since 1.4.2001 with the objectives of creation of scientific storage capacity with allied facilities in rural areas to meet various requirements of farmers for storing farm produce, processed farm produce, agricultural inputs, etc. The project for construction of rural godowns can be taken up by Local Bodies other than Municipal Corporations apart from individuals, farmers, Group of farmers/growers, Partnership/Proprietary firms, Non-Government Organizations (NGO's), Self Help Groups (SHGs). Corporations, Co-operatives, Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees, Marketing Boards in the entire country. Under the scheme, subsidy @ 25% of the capital cost of the project is provided, subject to a maximum ceiling on subsidy of Rs. 46.87 lakh. For the North-Eastern States and Hilly areas, subsidy @ 33.33% of the capital cost of the project is provided subject to maximum ceiling on subsidy of Rs. 62.50 lakh.

Suicide by farmers

918. SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV:
SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of farmers who committed suicide during January, 2009 to October 2009 in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, State-wise, district-wise and month-wise;

(b) whether cases of suicide in these States have increased due to drought situation;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the measures taken by his Ministry to tackle the drought and suicide by farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (d) As per information made available by the concerned State Government of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh no farmer has committed suicide due to agrarian reasons from January, 2009 to October, 2009. Month-wise and district-wise number of suicide by farmers in the State of Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Maharashtra is given in the enclosed Statements I, II and III respectively (*See* below). The Statement indicates eligible cases *i.e.* number of suicides due to agrarian distress.